

Introduction:

During my many online debates with members of the John Birch Society, along with seeing comments made by JBS members/sympathizers on Twitter, they often refer their critics to a 1965 JBS-produced 16mm filmstrip entitled "*Anarchy USA*" written and directed by G. Edward Griffin, the former Audio-Visual Director of the JBS (link to film below)

<https://www.filmpreservation.org/sponsored-films/screening-room/anarchy-u-s-a-1966>

For a greatly expanded critique of the JBS position on our civil rights movement and its leadership, see my report entitled "***Racism and the John Birch Society***" here:

<https://archive.org/details/0906-combined-pdf-racism-and-the-john-birch-society-283-pages/page/n1/mode/2up>

Anarchy links U.S. civil rights movement to worldwide Communist conspiracy. According to the JBS, *Anarchy USA* was put together by JBS staff in the summer of 1966 and it cost \$75,000 to produce and prints sold for \$150 each. 500 prints were in circulation around the U.S. and more than a dozen in Southern California. [Ken Reich: "*Birch Anti-Rights Film Creates Southland Stir*", 10/02/67, page C-1].

According to the *Times* article: *Anarchy* contained "**shocking photography of the mutilated victims of revolutionary activity in China, Cuba, and Algeria**" and then combined that with "**shots of Negro civil rights rallies here at home**, (and) the film concludes: "***We have offered only a brief survey of the material that is available to support the charge that the civil rights movement, as we know it today, is simply part of a worldwide movement, organized and directed by Communists, to enslave all mankind.***"

Rex Westerfield, western director of public relations for the Birch Society, described the film as "***decidedly the most powerful tool we've ever had***" in presenting the Birch Society's views on the civil rights question.

In the August 1966 *JBS Bulletin*, Robert Welch instructed JBS members:

"Show the film *Anarchy U.S.A.* far and wide and often...It will be far more convincing now—as to what can happen in this country—than it was before Detroit."

CRITIQUE OF ANARCHY USA

My critique originally appeared in my replies to various YouTube videos which JBS members posted online. I have edited that original critique below to provide additional information, including links to relevant documentary evidence.

"*Anarchy U.S.A.*" is a 76-minute 1966 documentary film produced by the John Birch Society. It claims that the civil rights movement in the United States is part of a Communist conspiracy to encourage a violent revolution which will result in the creation of a separate "**Negro Soviet Republic**" in the "**Black Belt**" of the South (a term which the film claims was created by Communists).

In reality, "*black belt*" refers to the cotton belt - which "**region derives its name from the black soil which is prevalent in contrast to the red clays to the north and south.**" [Thomas C. Cochran and Wayne Andrews: *Concise Dictionary of American History*, Scribner's, 1962, page 99]. The film implies that "**black belt**" refers to a new country based upon skin color.

Another distortion in the film pertains to a slogan used by Fidel Castro, i.e. "**Venceremos!**" which, in Spanish, means "**We will win**" but the film suggests that the slogan was translated into English by African American Communists and then set to music to become the anthem of our civil rights movement as "**We Shall Overcome**". Actually, this music originated from an old 19th century Baptist hymn entitled "**I'll Be All Right**" combined with the text of the 1901 gospel hymn "**I'll Overcome Someday**" by Methodist preacher Charles Albert Tindley. [Jon M. Spencer: *Protest and Praise—Sacred Music of Black Religion*, Fortress Press, 1991, page 84].

The film then tries to connect our civil rights movement to Communist revolutions in Algeria, Cuba, and China and the film claims that the same strategies used to produce Communist regimes in those places were being used in the U.S. —so it's all part of a sinister conspiracy to create a Negro Soviet Republic.

However, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover testified in 1960 that the Communist Party USA discarded its "Negro Soviet Republic" strategy at its 17th National Convention **in 1959!**

QUOTING FROM FBI FILE DOCUMENT ABOUT THIS CONVENTION:

"The Negro resolution adopted by the convention discarded the party's historic position advocating 'self-determination' meaning that Negroes should be given the right to form a separate nation in the Southern

States...The 1959 convention resolution hence represents a party admission that its position concerning Negroes is bankrupt. Time itself has shown that the party is not interested in the welfare of the Negro, but only in using him as a tool to advance party interests." [J. Edgar Hoover: *An Analysis of the 17th National Convention of the Communist Party USA*; Statement made to Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, 1/17/60, page 7; Also see: *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, March 1960 – for same comment.]

Further corroboration for this change in Communist Party strategy can be seen in testimony by a former FBI informant who later became a JBS member and paid speaker i.e. comments by Lola Belle Holmes (who attended the 17th National Convention).

In addition, the FBI falsified almost every major predicate of JBS ideology concerning our civil rights movement and its leadership.

Robert Welch and the JBS adopted the core white supremacist argument when the JBS declared in the June 1965 issue of the JBS Bulletin sent to all JBS members that:

"Our task must be simply to make clear that the movement known as 'civil rights' is Communist-plotted, Communist-controlled, and in fact...serves only Communist purposes."

Not surprisingly, this JBS filmstrip was shown at events sponsored by White Citizens Councils and by the Ku Klux Klan and by neo-nazi groups. For example, an FBI report about the Ku Klux Klan in Pennsylvania reported that the Bucks County chapter of the National Knights of the KKK showed *Anarchy USA* on January 22, 1974 (8 years after *Anarchy* was first released!). For example, see page 47 at:

https://archive.org/stream/foia_National_Knights_KKK-26/National_Knights_KKK-26#page/n95

Anarchy USA also features an interview with a former African American member of the Communist Party USA. (Leonard Patterson) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01XCkppfHkY>

However, Birchers never bother to perform due diligence to determine whether or not their sources are credible and reliable.

The Birch Society used several African Americans as paid speakers (including Patterson)— usually under the auspices of its front group, Truth About Civil Turmoil (TACT).

Significantly, NONE of the African Americans used by the JBS as paid speakers ever discussed the discrimination and oppression that black Americans confronted in their everyday lives—particularly in our southern states.

Instead, those black Birchers focused exclusively in their speeches upon what they claimed was "**Communist**" influence, control, and domination of our civil rights movement or alleged "**Communist**" involvement in racial disturbances.

For example, let's briefly consider Bircher Leonard Patterson:

His JBS-sponsored speech was entitled "***My Moscow Training in Civil Riots***"

On January 27, 1966 Patterson appeared on the Louis Lomax TV program in Los Angeles and he declared that the Watts riots in August 1965 were directed by the CPUSA.

By contrast, FBI investigative files falsify that contention – as did the Intelligence Division of the Los Angeles Police Department along with the McCone Commission which investigated the Watts riots. See details in my report entitled ***Racism and the JBS*** (link below):

<https://archive.org/details/0906-combined-pdf-racism-and-the-john-birch-society-283-pages/page/n1/mode/2up>

On February 28, 1966, Patterson stated in his speech at Attleboro MA that the civil rights movement was part of a conspiracy starting in the 1930's. He told his audience that NAACP, CORE and MLK Jr. were all **"under the leadership of the American Communist Party"**.

Patterson was an informant for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Many Birchers are very confused about informants. Informants provide unverified RAW information. That information often includes subjective or biased assertions or conclusions because the original source has some sort of ax to grind OR the source has a specific agenda which he/she wants to advance which colors the judgments they make OR the original source is not sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject matters being discussed to make fair, reasonable, and accurate conclusions. Furthermore, the original source may just be giving the FBI rumors, gossip, speculation, half-truths, or hearsay information.

Patterson's charges against Ralph Bunche were unanimously dismissed by the Loyalty Review Board and the Board then requested that the Department of Justice review Patterson's testimony for possible perjury prosecution! (Birchers never tell you that!)

In 1951, Patterson was contacted by the FBI's Detroit field office to inquire if he would be willing to provide information concerning an individual who had attended the Lenin School during 1932. According to a FBI comment on a New York City FBI search slip, Patterson "**refused to be interviewed re: (name redacted) attendance at Lenin School in Moscow unless he was compensated.**" [FBI-NYC 100-144597, serial #236, page 2, which is a 3/2/66 search slip in John Birch Society file showing all FBI-NYC file references to Patterson. Original documentation in FBI-NYC file 100-59645, serials #133, #144, #148.]

Patterson and other informants favored by the JBS (like Matt Cvetic) were more interested in the money they could get from our government for testifying rather than being scrupulously accurate about their experiences within the Communist Party. In other cases, they claimed to have expertise which was severely limited to a specific time, place, and scope -- BUT they often did NOT have genuine knowledge about the matters which they discussed in their JBS-sponsored speeches OR in their writings -- so they just substituted whatever personal opinions their hosts wanted to hear -- in order to receive their compensation.

After they joined the JBS Speaker's Bureau, some of these former FBI informants (like Julia Brown. Lola Belle Holmes and Delmar Dennis) totally contradicted what they had originally told their FBI case agents during the period when they were informants. Why? Because (in Julia Brown's case for example) she made a very lucrative living on the JBS lecture circuit and earned much more from the JBS than she ever did while getting compensated by the FBI. She also made considerably more than the annual income of her last husband, Curlee Brown. The FBI used a derogatory descriptive term for many of these folks, i.e. "**professional anti-Communists**".

For details concerning the following JBS paid speakers, see the reports linked below:

Most of the anti-civil rights movement JBS paid speakers spoke under the auspices of the JBS front groups Truth About Civil Turmoil (TACT) or Support Your Local Police (SYLP).

For documentary evidence about TACT and its speakers see the following FBI files:

FBI documents on TACT: <https://tinyurl.com/4vr8mmyt>

<https://tinyurl.com/ywn9u8yv> (see page 43 for JBS-TACT flyer re: Julia Brown and page 57 for JBS flyer re: Rev. Delmar Dennis)

<https://tinyurl.com/ywn9u8yv> (see page 7 for JBS flyer on JBS-TACT speaker Lola Belle Holmes)

<https://tinyurl.com/v2ysb2p6> (see page 7 for JBS flyer on JBS-TACT speaker Leonard Patterson and page 8 for JBS press release re: Patterson; and page 18 for JBS flyer on Lola Belle Holmes)

In addition, JBS press releases and flyers advertising their speakers can be seen in the following file: <https://archive.org/details/BirchSocietySpeakersBureauNationalRoster1967> See especially pages 50-54

For my comments regarding these JBS speakers, see:

JULIA CLARICE BROWN: See pages 30-36 at: <https://tinyurl.com/ycku2dw5>

LOLA BELLE HOLMES = See pages 37-39 at link provided above

DELMAR DENNIS = See pages 52-54 at link provided above

JBS POSITION REGARDING OUR CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

According to Robert Welch and the JBS, the aspirations of our civil rights movement were the direct result of Communist policy decisions. See relevant quotes below:

"The truth is that, if you look far enough, you will find every agitator on this issue being pushed from somewhere behind, by a Communist—even though the agitator may not know he is just a pawn in a dirty game." [Robert Welch, *A Letter to the South on Segregation*, *One Man's Opinion* magazine, September 1956, section III, page 7]. The possibility that at least some

civil rights activity is motivated by something other than communism is never considered. [NOTE: See rebuttal to Welch's claim in December 1954 report by the House Committee on Un-American Activities cited below.]

LINK to Welch's "**A Letter to the South**" article is here:

<https://archive.org/details/WELCHRobertALetterToTheSouthOnSegregation>

This reprint of Welch's September 1956 article was originally published in Mr. Welch's magazine entitled "*One Man's Opinion*".

It is important to understand the underlying principles which Mr. Welch was affirming/validating in his 1956 article. In effect, Welch was leaving black Americans to the mercy of the states and Welch understood that doing so put African Americans in a position of legal inferiority – which is the import of the 1896 Plessy decision.

In Plessy vs. Ferguson (163 U.S. 537), the Supreme Court was asked to consider a Louisiana act which required "**separate but equal**" accommodations in transportation facilities (a typical Jim Crow law). The Act imposed a penalty for passengers who chose to sit in an area assigned to the other race.

One passenger who had one great-grand-parent who was black, sat in a car reserved for white passengers and he was arrested. The Supreme Court held that the Louisiana Act was a reasonable exercise of the state's police power because segregation was not discrimination.

Welch's legal argument reduced African Americans to "**the condition of a subject race**" (to quote a comment from Justice Harlan's dissent). In Mississippi, for example, it was a crime to publish a statement advocating or suggesting social equality of the races.

It should also be noted that segregation laws (or other laws which took note of a person's race or color) during the period which Welch refers to, require statutory or judicial definitions of the term "**Negro**". All those definitions are made from the standpoint of the white person who seeks to avoid contact with any person he deems to be a "**Negro**". Consequently, in some states, anyone with any trace of Negro blood (no matter how distantly) was classified as a "**Negro**". This arbitrary standard is what Welch believed was required by American law. BTW, in Mississippi, Chinese children were sent to black schools.

Furthermore, acceptance of Welch's argument meant adopting a standard which was intended as the basis for prohibiting marriage of white persons with persons of color (prohibited in 29 states) and which required segregation of the races in interstate passenger traffic and in hospitals, and penal institutions, and in educational institutions—even when those facilities were not "equal". For example, in 1948-1949, the U.S. Office of Education reported that Mississippi spent an average of \$123 per white pupil in grade and high schools whereas they spent only \$27 per black pupil. Most other states spent considerably less per black student. See additional comments regarding Welch's adoption of white supremacist arguments in subsequent entries in the *Chronology* section of my Report on *Racism and the John Birch Society* (link previously provided and also appearing below under "**Resources**")

Welch argues that the May 17, 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision on de-segregation was not Constitutional because it revised the 10th and 14th Amendments by fiat and made educational policies subject to federal control rather than the intended state control.

Welch's 1956 argument is identical to the argument published by the White Citizens Councils and other southern racist groups. For example, in February 1956, Tom Ethridge wrote the following in his monthly column in the Citizens Councils' newsletter (article entitled "**Negro Progress is Big Credit To White South**"). [See page 19 of link to all Citizens Council newsletters here:

<http://www.citizenscouncils.com/links/>

(NOTE: However, this is a very large PDF (181MB) and takes a while to load):

Ethridge comment:

“The Negro’s progress as a race during the past century is one of the most inspiring chapters of American history. It not only is a tribute to the patience and friendship of Southern whites...Freely conceding that his social and economic status can be improved, the Southern Negro has much to be thankful for as a result of friendship and cooperation by his white friends.”

Welch conveniently omits the history of white resentment of successful black communities which resulted in numerous attacks by white mobs against African Americans and their homes, businesses, and churches such as in Atlanta (September 1906) when white mobs destroyed black-owned businesses competing with white businesses and they murdered black men; or East St. Louis IL in the summer of 1917 when white workers resented black men taking jobs at steel, aluminum, and meatpacking plants and, again, numerous black men were murdered; or Chester PA in July 1917 when, again, whites resented blacks who competed for wartime jobs, so they attacked black individuals and businesses at random killing 7 black men. Then in July 1919 there was the riot in Chicago when whites set fires on the south side of Chicago, killing 38 people and injuring more than 500. Perhaps the most infamous example was the 1921 Tulsa Massacre whose murderous violence by white mobs erased African American prosperity. Before it ended, 35 square blocks of Tulsa were destroyed, dozens of blacks were killed, over 800 people were injured, and thousands were left homeless. For details see this 1921 Oklahoma Commission Report: <https://www.okhistory.org/research/forms/freport.pdf>

For additional information re: Plessy v. Ferguson, see:

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/plessy-v-ferguson>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Plessy-v-Ferguson-1896>

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/163/537/#tab-opinion-1917400>

Robert Welch also claimed that the **“easy-going colored man”** of the South could be **“easily misled by agitators,”** and **“is now being inflamed into a hatred of his white neighbors which he never felt before.”** Welch also opined that the phrase **“civil rights”** was a Communist slogan. In this regard, Welch merely repeated an argument made by white supremacists. For example: Mississippians For States Rights was founded by Judge M.M. McGowan. This group was a re-birth of the 1948 Dixiecrat movement. The Chairman of this new group was W.B. Fontaine of Jackson MS. Fontaine explained the organizing principle of his new group:

“There is no such thing as an acceptable civil rights program. Civil rights laws are foreign to the concept of English law, the basis for our government, and are connected with socialism.” [Laurel MS Leader-Call, 5/31/56, pages 1 and 7; “States Rights Group Sets Up Organization”].

Welch also asserted that racial integration **“embarrassed”** good black Americans. [Robert Welch: **“A Letter to the South on Segregation”**, *One Man’s Opinion* magazine, September 1956, page 4]. **NOTE:** See rebuttal of Welch’s assertions in December 1954 House Committee on Un-American Activities report, **“The American Negro in the Communist Party”**] at link below:

<https://archive.org/details/HCUAAmericanNegroInTheCommunistParty12225421pp>

Of course, at no point, does Mr. Welch explain how he arrived at his understanding about what the majority of African Americans in the United States believed about their status OR what they believed about the degree or nature of the discrimination and oppression they confronted in their everyday lives.

Presumably, Welch never consulted George Schuyler who wrote in 1961 about **“The White Citizens Council which has branches or cells everywhere, controls by terror such states as Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and to a lesser extent, Virginia.”** [Note: Schuyler later became a member and paid speaker for the JBS but his JBS speeches did not refer to his previous sentiments as expressed above.]

At no point does Robert Welch or the John Birch Society consider the possibility that society at large could have some responsibility or some blame for creating an environment which produced feelings of despair or impotence within a minority community nor would our society ever bear

any blame for the limitations it placed upon opportunities available to black Americans or other minorities.

Instead, JBS writers and speakers chose to de-legitimize and de-humanize black Americans—especially if they dared to protest their condition.

For example, during racial upheavels such as the Watts Riot of 1965, the JBS referred to **“the spear concession in Watts”**. [Gary Allen and Bill Richardson: *“Los Angeles: Hell in the City of Angels”*, *American Opinion* magazine, September 1965, pages 1-14]. Obviously, such comments are welcomed by racists. See additional JBS references to African Americans as **“cannibals”** or **“savages”** or **“animals”** and **“gorillas”** or **“cockroaches”** in my *Chronology* which is pages 24-134 of my Report entitled **“*Racism and the John Birch Society*”** (link previously provided above).

Welch's position about racially-motivated segregation laws, customs, and practices did not change during the course of his lifetime. He continued to circulate his 1956 analysis during the 1960's and afterward through his organization, the John Birch Society. See quotes below.

It should be noted that Welch grew up in a very small southern community where segregation was considered a normal and reasonable practice. The Welch family owned slaves during the 19th century. For details, see Dr. E.H. Miller's new biography of Welch entitled: **“*A Conspiratorial Life: Robert Welch, the John Birch Society, and the Revolution of American Conservatism*”** which will be published in January 2022 by the University of Chicago Press (see link below):

<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/C/bo123795778.html>

Obviously, Welch adopted the assumptions and conclusions which he encountered in his small southern community.

In the June 1965 *JBS Bulletin*, Mr. Welch observed:

“Our task must be simply to make clear that the movement known as ‘civil rights’ is Communist-plotted, Communist-controlled, and in fact...serves only Communist purposes.”

In August 1965, the JBS ran a full-page ad in many U.S. newspapers entitled **“What’s Wrong With Civil Rights?”** One of the answers provided by the JBS was:

“For the civil rights movement in the United States with all of its growing agitation and riots and bitterness, and insidious steps toward the appearance of civil war, has not been infiltrated by the Communists, as you now frequently hear. It has been deliberately and almost wholly created by the Communists patiently building up to this present stage for more than thirty years.” [FBI-HQ 62-104401, serial #2621, 8/31/65 airtel from SAC Birmingham to J. Edgar Hoover with attachment of ad from Sunday 8/29/65 *Birmingham AL News*.]

In May 1969, Robert Welch sent a financial appeal to JBS members and friends wherein he boasted about what he considered to be the major accomplishments of the Society:

“We have, we believe, done more to show the Communist plans and hands behind the so-called civil rights movement than all other groups in America put together. Through books, pamphlets, films, filmstrips and speakers we have worked incessantly on this problem since the Society was founded.” [Robert Welch: *“To Our Members and Friends”*, 5/20/69, page 4, paragraph 7d]

Even in the 21st century, the JBS continued to promote its continual and constant denunciation of all civil rights activity because of its alleged Communist domination:

“Just as the John Birch Society showed in the 1960's that the communists basically ran both the civil rights movement and the KKK, the strategy was nothing new. The former was used to transfer power to Washington DC in the name of civilrights and the latter provided a pretext

for transferring power to Washington. You cannot get a really good conflict started unless you control both sides of the argument." [JBS Bulletin, May 2008]

In the November 1965 JBS Bulletin, page 44, Robert Welch declared:

"We have said many times, and we repeat now, that if you can fully expose the civil rights fraud, you will break the back of the Communist conspiracy. But the word '*fully*' is important in that sentence. It calls for bringing a preponderant majority of our fellow citizens really to grasp the fact that the '*civil rights*' program has been designed by Communists, is controlled by Communists, and will be used by the Communists as a vital part of their total strategy for taking over our country."

However, the John Birch Society ignored or suppressed the potent testimony of Birch Society members, endorsers, and speakers who refuted standard JBS dogma---based upon their personal experiences within the CPUSA as former FBI informants. Examples will be discussed below.

According to Robert Welch and the JBS, the aspirations of our civil rights movement were the direct result of Communist policy decisions.

The possibility that at least some civil rights activity is motivated by something other than Communism is never considered. [NOTE: See rebuttal to Welch's claim in December 1954 report by the House Committee on Un-American Activities cited below.]

In the June 1965 JBS Bulletin, Mr. Welch observed:

"Our task must be simply to make clear that the movement known as '*civil rights*' is Communist-plotted, Communist-controlled, and in fact...serves only Communist purposes."

However, the John Birch Society ignored or suppressed the potent testimony of Birch Society members, endorsers, and speakers who refuted standard JBS dogma---based upon their personal experiences within the CPUSA as former FBI informants.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Joseph H. Jeppson, "**Confusion U.S.A.**," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* Volume 2, (Spring 1967), page 110

<https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/issues/V02N01.pdf>

Racism and the John Birch Society (A combination of all my chapters re: the JBS position on our civil rights movement)

<https://archive.org/details/0906-combined-pdf-racism-and-the-john-birch-society-283-pages/mode/2up>

FBI position re: our civil rights movement and its leadership:

ON NAACP, see pages 42-47 of: <https://tinyurl.com/ycku2dw5>

J. Edgar Hoover comment:

"Let me emphasize that the American civil rights movement is *not*, and has *never* been dominated by the communists--because the overwhelming majority of civil rights leaders in this country, both Negro and white, have recognized and rejected communism as a menace to the freedoms of all." [J. Edgar Hoover speech, 12/12/64, "*Our Heritage of Greatness*", page 7 - Hoover speech before Pennsylvania Society and the Society of Pennsylvania Women; bold emphasis on "**not**" and "**never**" appears in original document].

JBS CLAIMS RE: "**COMMUNIST TRAINING SCHOOL**" ATTENDED BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. (referring to Highlander Folk School, Monteagle TN)

<https://archive.org/details/ReportOnHighlanderFolkSchool12019/mode/2up>

For additional comments by Hoover, the FBI, House Committee on Un-American Activities and other security entities see link below:

<https://archive.org/details/government-agency-praise-for-civil-rights-movement>

1954 Report by House Committee on Un-American Activities, "***The American Negro in the Communist Party***":
<https://archive.org/details/HCUAAmericanNegroInTheCommunistParty12225421pp>